

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02443 281447Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 INR-10 HA-05 SS-15 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7824
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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S E C R E T BEIRUT 2443

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, LE, IS
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: RETURN OF REFUGEES

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 5246, (B) BEIRUT 2297

1. AID REP HAS DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE OF REF (A) WITH GOL
MILITARY COORDINATOR ON TWO OCCASIONS DURING PAST WEEK.
TO CERTAIN DEGREE, SOME OF THE PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN OVERTAKEN
BY EVENTS. VIA THE ICRC CHANNEL, GOL COORDINATED ENTRY OF
SOCIAL WELFARE TEAMS INTO IDF-HELD AREAS BEGINNING APRIL
22. TWO CONVOYS OF FOOD--ONE TO BINT JBEIL DISTRICT AND
ONE TO TYRE DISTRICT--SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ROUNDS EARLIER
IN WEEK. TECHNICAL TEAMS; E.G. WATER, ELECTRICITY, HAVE
NOT BEEN AS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE PRINCIPAL KEY LOCATIONS ARE
RAS EL-AIN AND TAIBE AREA. UPCOMING WITHDRAWAL SHOULD
RESOLVE PROBLEMS.

2. QUESTION OF CONGESTION AT CHECKPOINTS--AT LEAST FOR
OFFICIAL CONVOYS--WAS LARGELY RESOLVED BY LEBANESE
EXPEDIENT OF BUSING RETURNEES TO DEMARCATION LINE,
CHECKING THEM THROUGH IDF AND HAVING THEM BOARD BUS/CAR

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TRANSPORT ARRANGED FROM WITHIN IDF-HELD AREA.

3. PROBLEM OF ARRESTS PERSISTS BUT LIST OF NAMES PROMISED
BECAME IRRELEVANT BECAUSE INDIVIDUALS SINCE RELEASED.
PATTERN SEEMS TO BE THAT PERSONS DETAINED ARE RELEASED
AFTER ABOUT 72 HOURS. INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN QUESTIONED
PRINCIPALLY FOR KNOWN OR SUSPECTED "RELATIONS" WITH

PALESTINIANS WHICH CAN RANGE FROM HAVING RENTED A HOUSE TO A PALESTINIAN TO CONDUCTING COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS, E.G. SELLING PRODUCE. MILITARY COORDINATOR CITED NO CASES WHERE INDIVIDUALS HAD BEEN HELD FOR MORE THAN 5-6 DAYS. ON OTHER HAND, HE CLAIMED THAT ALL PERSONS OF WHOM HE WAS AWARE WERE LEBANESE. (COMMENT: REFTEL TALKS ABOUT "PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS" WOULD INFILTRATE WHAT ARE KNOWN TO BE METICULOUSLY OPERATED CHECKPOINTS.)

4. QUESTION POSED AT END LAST PARAGRAPH, REF (A), WAS ANSWERED IN PART IN PARA 1, REF (B)

5. MILITARY COORDINATOR AND STAFF DISCUSSED IN APRIL 27 CONVERSATION QUESTION OF WHEN AND WOULD ISRAELIS WITHDRAW? POINT MADE THAT ISRAELIS HAVE NEVER WITHDRAWN FULLY AFTER INCURSIONS INTO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. OFFICERS CONCERNED AT PROSPECT THAT ISRAELIS MAY DRIVE HARD BARGAIN OR POSE IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS IN EFFORT TO FORCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOL AS CONDITION FOR FINAL WITHDRAWAL. FEELING IS THAT GOL NOT IN POSITION TO NEGOTIATE AND WOULD HOPE FOR UNCONDITIONAL RETURN TO PRE-MARCH 1978 BORDER WITHOUT DIALOGUE. ASSUMING RETURN OF GOL PRESENCE IN ENTIRE AREA OF SOUTH, FATE OF "GOOD FENCE" WOULD ALSO COME INTO QUESTION.

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6. AID REP GAVE VIEW THAT UN RESOLUTIONS CALLED FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND WITHOUT EVIDENCE THAT ISRAELIS INTENDED OTHERWISE, ONE HAD TO WAIT AND SEE. AID REP ASKED ABOUT MAJOR HADDAD AND CAPT. SHIDIAC AND THEIR FOLLOWERS. MILITARY COORDINATOR JOKINGLY SAID "THAT WILL BE EASY; WE CAN MAKE THEM AMBASSADORS OR PERHAPS MILITARY ATTACHES." (FYI: SHIDIAC FORCES SOUTHT TO STOP UNHCR REP, HIS DEPUTY AND FORMER UNTSO OBSERVER IN AIN EBEL ON APRIL 26 AT CHECKPOINT. UN VEHICLE PROCEEDED SLOWLY THROUGH CHECKPOINT WITHOUT STOPPING AT WHICH POINT GUARDS FIRED THREE SHOTS IN AIR. UN REP STOPPED, EXPLAINED NATURE OF MISSION AND ORGANIZATION AND ULTIMATELY WAS ALLOWED PROCEED. END FYI.)
PARKER

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NNN

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